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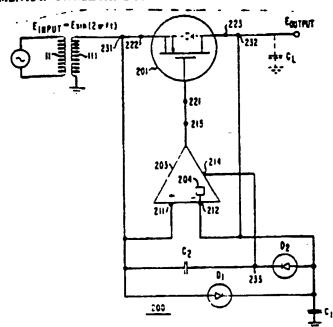
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(54) This: IMPROVEMENTS IN OR RELATING TO RECTIFIER CIRCUITS



(57) Abstract

A two-terminal rectifier circuit (200), useful for converting an input a.c. voltage into an output d.c. voltage, is formed by a power MOSFET (201) which is controlled by a comparator (203) designed to turn on the MOSFET once during each. a.c. cycle when the input a.c. voltage is nearly equal to its peak positive value thereby generating a relatively high d.c. output voltage.

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#### IMPROVEMENTS IN OR RELATING TO RECTIFIER CIRCUITS

#### Background of the Invention

This invention relates to rectifier circuits.

In the art of semiconductor electronics, very large scale integrated (VLSI) circuits typically require power sources of relatively small positive d.c. voltages, in the past typically about +5 volts. As the integrated circuit art progresses, even smaller d.c. voltages are 10 becoming typical. In many situations, however, the only conveniently available power sources are a.c. voltage sources, typically having more than 5 wolt peaks. For use by an integrated circuit requiring a power supply of 5 volts d.c., the a.c. voltage can be stepped down by a 15 conventional transformer to about 5 volts peak a.c., and this 5 wolt peak a.c. voltage must then be converted to 5 volts d.c. To this end, a semiconductor rectifier circuit can be used, typically a peak detector diode arrangementthat is, a pn junction diode feeding a capacitive load. One basic problem in such an arrangement arises from the forward junction diode voltage drop (about 0.7 volt or more in silicon) encountered in such a conventional peak detector diode arrangement. Thus, for an input a.c. voltage of peak B = 5.0 volts, the output voltage is less 25 than about 4.3 volts, that is, in the range of about 0.7: volt to 1.0 volt or more below E for semiconductor junctions in silicon. As a consequence, undesirably large power losses result.

#### . Summary of the Invention

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According to this invention a rectifier circuit includes a power transistor device having a first high current carrying terminal serving as a rectifier circuit output terminal, a second high current carrying terminal serving as a rectifier input terminal, and a control terminal for turning the transistor device on and off, and a comparator having first and second input terminals connected to the rectifier circuit input and output

BUREAD OMO! WIDO NATIONAL terminals respectively for supplying a control signal to
the control terminal of the power transistor device to turn
the device on when the voltage at the circuit input
terminal exceeds the voltage at the circuit output terminal

less a prescribed amount.

#### Description of the Drawings

FIG. 1 is a schematic circuit diagram of a prior art rectifier circuit arrangement;

PIG. 2 is a schematic circuit diagram of a rectifier circuit arrangement embodying the invention; and PIG. 3 is a schematic circuit diagram of a rectifier circuit arrangement embodying the invention.

Detailed Description

A prior art approach, as illustrated in FIG. 1, 15 taught in "Improving Power Supply Efficiency with MOSPET" Synchronous Rectifiers, by R.S. Ragan et al, Proceedings of Powercon 9, Minth International Solid-State Power Electronics Conference (July 1982), Session D, Paper D-4, pp. 1-5, at p. 4, Sections 6.1-6.3. Briefly, a full-way 20 rectifier circuit arrangement 10 includes a pair of power ... MOSFETS (Metal Oxide Semiconductor Field Effect Transistor) 101 and 102, each bereinafter called a "power FET". Secondary transformer windings 111 and 121, energized by primary transformer winding 11, deliver a.c. input to the 25 power FETs. Each power FET is inherently connected in parallel with its inherent unidirectional current inhibiting diode characteristic (indicated by dotted lines in PIG. 1), and each such power PET is connected in a conventional diode peak rectifier arrangement with respect 30 to the input supplied to secondary transformer windings 111 and 121, respectively, and feeds output power to a resistive load (not shown) connected in parallel with a capacitive load  $C_L$ . To reduce the forward diode voltage drop, each power PET is turned on periodically by means 35 a sample (feed-forward) of the a.c. input delivered to the gate terminal of the FET. More specifically, the gat electrode of each power FET is fed input by an auxiliary.

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a.c. voltage developed by auxiliary secondary transformer windings 112 and 122, respectively. Thereby one of the power PETs (101) is turned on, and is maintained on, only in a time-neighborhood of the peak of the a.c. input cycle, 5 i.e., only when the a.c input is at or near its peak (maximum) value: and the other of the power PETs (102) is turned on, and is maintained on, only in the neighborhood of each trough (minimum) of the a.c. cycle. In this way, the output voltage E OUTPUT developed across an output 10 load baving a capacitive loading  $C_{\rm L}$  desirably does not suffer from a full forward diode voltage drop. However, the gate-to-source voltage of the power PET thus varies as  $(B_1-B_2)\sin(2\pi ft)$ , where  $B_1$  and  $B_2$  are the peak voltages, respectively, delivered by the auxiliary 15 transformer windings to the gate and source of the power PET, where  $\underline{f}$  is the frequency of the a.c. input, and  $\underline{t}$  is the time. Therefore, each turning on (and temporary remaining on) of the power FET at and near the peak of each a.c. cycle, when sin(2\*ft) approaches its maximum value of 20 unity, is not a sudden process, but is characterized by the relatively smooth and long transition characteristic of  $(B_1-B_2)\sin(2\pi ft)$  when  $\sin(2\pi ft)$  is approximately equal to +1. Accordingly, undesirably large amounts of energy are lost in the power FST during each a.c. cycle because of 25 relatively large currents flowing therethrough (during the slow transitions) during time intervals when sin(2\*ft) is very nearly equal to  $\pm 1$ , i.e., intervals when the voltage drop across the PET is not negligible.

In another approach, taught by S. Waaben, in a

paper entitled "FET Switching Devices for Powering of
Telecommunications Circuits," published in <u>Proceedings of
Intelec 81</u>, pp. 250-252, Third International
Telecommunications Energy Conference (May 1981), a
photoemitter (light-emitting diode) controlled the on-off
condition of a photodetector which, in turn, controlled the
on-off condition of a "power PET" arranged in a
conventional peak rectifier arrangement, i.e., an



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arrangement of the power FET (with its inherent unidirectional current inhibiting diode-characteristic)—feeding a capacitive output load. Specifically, the timing of the on-off condition of the photoemitter was arranged to control the timing of the power FET in a manner similar to the timing discussed above in connection with FIG. 1.

Rectifier operation resulted in which voltage and power losses—otherwise caused by semiconductor diode junction forward voltage drops and by slow on-off transitions of the power FET—could be reduced substantially. However, the use of the optical control technology (photoemitters and photodetectors) means that the circuit was a three-terminal device including ground (one optical terminal and two electronic terminals) and entails obvious disadvantages in complexity and cost.

FIG. 2 shows a rectifier circuit arrangement 200 (half-wave portion) in accordance with this invention f r delivering d.c. power to an output circuit terminal 232; including a transistor device 201. This transistor device 20 201 has one of its high current carrying terminals 222 connected to the rectifier circuit input terminal 231 and another of its high current carrying terminals 223 connected to the rectifier circuit output terminal 232. a.c. input voltage E<sub>rmpnn</sub>=Esin(2\*ft) is supplied at 25 the circuit input terminal 231 by secondary transformer windings 111. The transistor 201 is advantageously a power transistor, that is, capable of handling power levels of the order of the power delivered to the circuit output terminal 232. This transistor 201 typically is a power FET having an inherent unidirectional current inhibiting diod characteristic indicated by the dotted line therein. A first unidirectional current inhibiting semiconductor junction diode D, can be added in parallel with the transistor 201 in case this transistor lacks sufficient 35 forward current handling capacity when it is off. A first capacitor C, is connected between the first diode D, and ground but it should be understood that this first

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capacitor C<sub>1</sub> can be omitted if the output

capacitance C<sub>2</sub> (shown in dotted lines) of the output load

circuit (not shown) is sufficient to smooth out the voltage

at the output terminal 232. Thus, the first diode D<sub>1</sub>, in

5 combination with the first capacitor C<sub>1</sub> (and/or the

output capacitance C<sub>2</sub>), forms a conventional peak

detector and even in the absence of the transistor 201

would supply a d.c. voltage at the circuit output terminal

232; however, such a d.c. voltage as supplied by the peak

10 detector is less than the peak E of the a.c. input by an

undesirably large amount, that is, by the amount of the

forward junction drop in the diode D<sub>1</sub>. To reduce this

undesirably large amount, the transistor device 201 is

added together with control circuitry for controlling the

The on-off condition of the transistor 201 is controlled by output from the comparator 203 developed at the comparator's output terminal 215 and delivered to the control terminal 221 of the transistor 201. The comparator 203 has a positive input terminal 211 connected to the 20 circuit input terminal 231 and a negative input terminal 212 connected to the circuit output terminal 232. The negative input terminal 212 is connected to a voltage level shifter 204 which down-shifts the voltage level of the 25 negative input terminal 212 by a prescribed amount  $\sigma$  for comparison with the voltage level of the positive terminal 211. That is, the output of the comparator 203 at the comparator output terminal is relatively high when and only when the voltage at the positive input terminal 211 plus 30 the prescribed amount  $\sigma$  exceeds the voltage  $E_{\text{DUTPDT}}$  at the negative input terminal 212. Thus, the output of the comparator shifts from low to high when Esin(2+ft) goes higher than  $(B_{OUTPUT}^{-\sigma})$ , or Esin(2\*ft)+ $\sigma$  exceeds  $B_{OUTPUT}$ . A second junction diode  $D_2$  and a second 35 capacitor (C2) are connected in series across the circuit input and output terminals 231 and 232, respectively. Power for the comparator 203 is supplied at the

SUEEAU OMOTI WEO WERNATIONE comparator's power supply terminal 214 from a terminal 23 located between the second junction diode  $D_2$  and the second capacitor  $C_2$ .

It should be noted that the diodes D<sub>1</sub> and D<sub>2</sub>

5 together with the capacitors C<sub>1</sub> and C<sub>2</sub> form a voltage multiplier (doubler) ladder arrangement: the voltage at the multiplier's output terminal 233, and hence at the comparator's power supply terminal 214, relative to ground, is equal to 2E + Esin(2vft) less the sum of th forward diode voltage drops across D<sub>1</sub> and D<sub>2</sub>, and hence, relative to the circuit input terminal 231, is equal to 2E less the sum of the forward diode voltage drops across D<sub>1</sub> and D<sub>2</sub>.

During operation, the unidirectional diode 15, characteristic (if any) inherent in the transistor device 201 plus the unidirectional diode characteristic of the first diode  $D_1$ , in combination with  $C_1 + C_7$  in a diode peak detector arrangement, bring the output voltage-EQUIPME at the circuit output terminal 232 to a steady d.c. voltage of E less a forward diode junction voltage drop (provided that C1 + CL is sufficient), typically 5.0 volts less 0.7 volt or more, i.e., typically 4.3 volts or less. When the voltage of Example = Esin(2\*ft) exceeds Equipur -a, the transistor device 201 turns 25 on and brings the output voltage EOUTPUT to substantially 3-c. Hence, the transistor 201 turns on Esin(2 $\tau$ ft) exceeds E-2 $\sigma$ . Por example, if E = 5.0 volt  $\sigma$  = 0.1 Volt, then  $B_{OHTPHT}$  = 4.9 Volts instead of the 4.3 volts or less resulting from the diode peak detecting 30 arrangement alone. By adjusting o, the output can be correspondingly adjusted. However, the value of  $\ddot{a}$  is selected to be not too small, lest the time duration of the on condition of the power PET be too small for delivering sufficient charge to the output terminal, and not too 35 large, lest the output voltage be undesirably too much lower than E.

Fig. 3 shows a specific embodiment of the



invention, particularly as to the details of a specific comparator. As shown in FIG. 3, a rectifier circuit arrangement 300 (half-wave portion) having a circuit input terminal 331 and a circuit output terminal 332, comprises a power FET 301 (T<sub>1</sub>) with its source terminal 322 connected to the circuit input terminal 331, its drain terminal 323 connected to the circuit output terminal 332, and its gate terminal 321 connected to an output terminal 315 of a comparator 303. The power FET T1 has a threshold of about 10 2.5 volts and inherently has a unidirectional current inhibiting diode characteristic (indicated by dotted lines) which shunts the source terminal 322 to the drain terminal 323 of the power FET (T<sub>1</sub>).

The purpose of the comparator 303 is to deliver

15 feedback to the gate of the power PET to control its on-off
condition suitably, as more fully described below. The
comparator 303 has a power supply terminal for receiving
power from an output terminal 333 of a voltage doubler
arrangement. The voltage doubler comprises a pair of
20 capacitors C<sub>1</sub> and C<sub>2</sub> connected in a ladder
configuration to a pair of unidirectional current
inhibiting diodes D<sub>1</sub> and D<sub>2</sub>.

The comparator 303 includes a switching transistor  $T_2$ , local transistors  $T_3$  and  $T_4$ , and resistors  $R_1$ 25 and  $R_2$ . The switching transistor  $T_2$  is enhancement mode with a relatively sharp threshold of about 2.5 volts; and the transistors  $T_3$  and  $T_4$ , connected as load devices (gate shorted to source), are depletion mode with source-drain currents in the saturation region (drain-source voltage above about 3 volts) of about 3 milliamps for zero gate voltages.

The capacitance of C<sub>1</sub> can be supplied by the output load capacitance C<sub>L</sub> itself or by an added capacitor element such that the sum of C<sub>1</sub> and C<sub>L</sub> is equal to the gate capacitance of the power FET multiplied by a factor of about 5 or more for advantageous performance. The capacitance of C<sub>2</sub> is advantageously

BUREAU MPI WIPO supplied by an added capacitor element having a capacitance of at least 5 times that of the gate capacitance of the power FET. The diode D<sub>1</sub> is in parallel with the inherent diode characteristic (dotted line) of the power FET. Thus, 5 the diode D<sub>1</sub> is not necessarily present in the circuit 300 as a separate element but is ordinarily supplied by the inherent diode characteristic of the power FET. However, in case a power transistor lacking such a diode characteristic is used instead of the power FET, then an added diode element D<sub>1</sub> is advantageously to be added as a separate element.

It should be noted that the circuit output terminal is fed current both by the inherent diode of the power PET and the source-drain path power PET itself if and when it is on, as well as by the diode D<sub>1</sub>. Thus, the voltage R<sub>OUTPUT</sub> at the circuit output terminal 332 is maintained not only by the power PET but also by the diode D<sub>1</sub>.

During operation, as more fully explained below, 20 the transistor  $T_2$  is off when and only when the instantaneous value of the a.c. voltage at the circuit input terminal 33; is at or near its peak, that is, when E\_INPUT = Esin(2rft) is equal to or in excess of  $E_{OUTPUT}^{-\sigma}$ , and the switching transistor  $T_2$  is 25 otherwise on. Thus, whenever the instantaneous value of the a.c. input voltage Esin(2\*ft) at the circuit input terminal 331 is at or near its peak value and hence  $T_2$  is off, then the voltage of the gate electrode terminal 321 the power FET is driven by transistor load T2 (acting as 30 a current source) to the voltage of terminal 333, i.e., to the voltage 2E plus the voltage at circuit input terminal 331 less the relatively small voltage drop across  $D_2$  and accordingly the power FET is then strongly on, since its gate voltage then exceeds its source voltage by almost 25, 35 i.e., almost about 10 volts (much more than the threshold of the power FET). On the other hand, whenever the a.c. input voltage is not at or near its peak value, the

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switching transistor T2 is on, as explained more fully below, and hence the gate voltage of the power FET is then clamped by T2 to a value below threshold of the power FET, more specifically, essentially to the voltage at 5 the circuit input terminal 331 and hence to the voltage at the source terminal 322 of the power PET 301. Thus the power FET is off when the a.c. input voltage is not at or near its peak. By "essentially" here is meant excluding the relatively small voltage drop across the resistor Ro 10 equal to the current through the load T2 multiplied by R2. For a resistance of R2 equal to typically about 200 ohms or less, this voltage drop across R2 is thus equal to about 0.6 volt or less, and this nonvanishing resistance reduces the voltage excursion of the gate of the 15 power FET during each a.c. cycle and hence reduces the power loss in the gate circuit of the power FET. If such power loss is unimportant; R2 can be made equal to zero. In any event, the drop across R2 should be small enough to keep the power PET off when  $T_2$  is on.

During operation, the switching transistor T<sub>2</sub>
turns off (and hence the power FET T<sub>1</sub> turns on) at a time
t<sub>1</sub> when the voltage at the gate of T<sub>2</sub> (and hence the
voltage at terminal 316 of resistor R<sub>1</sub>) attains a value
which is equal to the instantaneous a c input voltage,

25 E<sub>IMPUT</sub> = Esin(2πft<sub>1</sub>) plus a threshold voltage V<sub>T</sub>
of T<sub>2</sub>, i.e., when the voltage at terminal 316 attains
Esin(2πft<sub>1</sub>) + V<sub>T</sub>. On the other hand, the voltage at
terminal 316 is equal to E<sub>OUTPUT</sub> + iR<sub>1</sub>, where i is
the current supplied by the load T<sub>4</sub>. Since the output

30 voltage E<sub>OUTPUT</sub> itself is equal to E-σ, it follows
that the switching transistor T<sub>2</sub> turns off at a time t<sub>1</sub>
when Esin(2πft<sub>1</sub>) + V<sub>T</sub> = E - σ + iR<sub>1</sub>, i.e., at a time
t<sub>1</sub> when:

 $Esin(2\pi ft_1) = E - \sigma + iR_1 - V_T$  (1)

Likewise, as the a.c. input voltage subsequently



decreases from its peak E, the switching transistor T2. turns on at a time  $t_2$  when the a.c. input voltage falls (from the peak) to this same value of E THPUT, i.e., at a subsequent time  $t_2$  when  $sin(2\pi ft_2) = sin(2\pi ft_1)$ . Accordingly, Equipper will be substantially equal to z- $\sigma$  provided the capacitance  $C_L$  +  $C_1$  is sufficient to maintain the voltage at the output terminal 332 at substantially this same value during the remainder of the a.c. cycle when  $T_2$  is on and hence the power FET is off. 10 Thus, setting Esin(2vft1) substantially equal to E-2s in Equation (1), it follows that  $iR_1$  is equal to  $(V_T - \sigma)$ . . In an illustrative case, the current i supplied by the l  $T_A$  is equal to about 3 milliamps, and the threshold  $V_{\pi}$ of switching transistor T2 is equal to about 2.5 volts, 15 so that if  $R_1$  is set equal to about 800 ohms, then  $\sigma$  is about 0.1 volt.

Accordingly, the comparator 303 acts as an ordinary comparator which delivers a high level output (a voltage equal to approximately 2E above the 20 instantaneous a.c. input) when the input (ETNPUT) delivered to one of its input terminals (311) exceeds th input (E) delivered to another of its input terminals:(312 less the prescribed amount o, and which delivers a low level output (essentially equal to the instantaneous 25 input) otherwise. In other words, the comparator 303 includes a level shifting property at its negative input; terminal 312, to wit, a voltage level down-shift of  $\sigma$ . This down-shift property is thus incorporated in the comparator 203 of FIG. 2 as the voltage level shifter 2047 30 In any event, this level shifter 204 should be selected to down-shift the voltage applied to the input terminal 212 the comparator 203 by a (small) prescribed amount, such that the comparator 203 delivers its high level output at its output terminal 215 to the gate electrode terminal 22 35 of the power FET 201 when and only when the input voltage to the input terminal 211 of the comparator 203 exceeds ti peak of the a.c. input voltage delivered at the circuit

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input terminal 231 less the (small) prescribed amount of Typically the prescribed amount is about 0.1 volt for a 5 volt peak 8 of an a.c. input voltage applied at the circuit input terminal 231.

It should be noted that even though the approach of  $E_{\rm INPUT}$  to its peak E is relatively slow in time because of its approach to a maximum, nevertheless the turning off of the switching transistor  $T_2$ , as  $E_{\rm IMPUT}$  reaches E less the (small) prescribed amount  $\sigma$ , is a well-defined sudden process. The suddenness of the process results from the well-defined threshold of transistor  $T_2$ . Thus the transistor  $T_2$  advantageously has a relatively sharp threshold, that is, the source-drain impedance of  $T_2$  has a relatively steep characteristic as plotted against its gate-to-source voltage.

It should be recognized that the rectifier circuit arrangements 200 and 300 are half-wave rectifiers and that, for full-wave rectification, and hence still smoother BOUTPUT, a pair of each of such circuits should be connected in a conventional full-wave rectifier configuration.

Although the invention has been described in detail in terms of a specific embodiment, various modifications can be made.

25 For example, instead of the power FET, other switching transistors with suitable power handling capability and suitable threshold can be used. Moreover, instead of a voltage doubler (D<sub>1</sub>, D<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>1</sub>, C<sub>2</sub>), a voltage tripler or other source can be used. Finally, 30 instead of a level down-shifter at the negative input terminal of the comparator, a level up-shifter at its positive input terminal can be used.



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#### Claims

- transistor device (201) having a first high current carrying terminal (223) serving as a rectifier circuit.

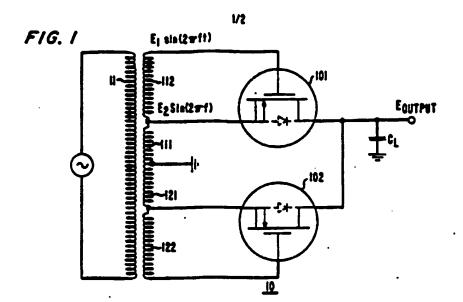
  5 output terminal, a second high current carrying terminal (222) serving as a rectifier circuit input terminal, and a control terminal for turning the transistor device on and off, and characterized by a comparator (203) having first and second input terminals (211, 212) connected to the rectifier circuit input and output terminals respectively for supplying a control signal to the control terminal of the power transistor device to turn the device on when the voltage at the circuit input terminal exceeds the voltage at the circuit output terminal less a prescribed amount.
  - 2. A circuit as claimed in claim 1 characterized in that the comparator includes level shifting means (204) for shifting the voltage level applied to one of the comparator input terminals by the presecribed amount.
  - 3. A circuit as claimed in claim 2 characterized in that the level shifting means serves to down-shift the voltage level applied to the second comparator input terminal.
- 4. A circuit as claimed in claim 2 characterized by a voltage multiplier (D<sub>1</sub>, D<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>1</sub>, C<sub>2</sub>) connected

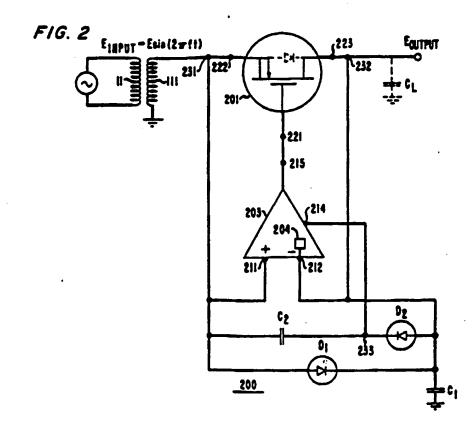
  25 between the circuit input terminal and a power supply terminal (214) of the comparator.
  - 5. A circuit as claimed in claim 4 characterized in that the multiplier includes a first capacitor  $\{C_1\}$ , and first unidirectionally conductive means  $\{D_1\}$  connected between the circuit input terminal and a first terminal of the first capacitor.
  - 6. A circuit as claimed in claim 5 characterized in that the first terminal of the first capacitor is connected to the circuit output terminal (232).
- 7. A circuit as claimed in claim 6 characterized by a second capacitor (C<sub>2</sub>) connected between the circuit input terminal and the comparator power supply terminal.

and second unidirectionally conductive means  $(D_2)$  connected between the circuit cutput terminal and the comparator power supply terminal.

 A circuit as claimed in any preceding claim
 characterized in that the transistor device is a power FST.

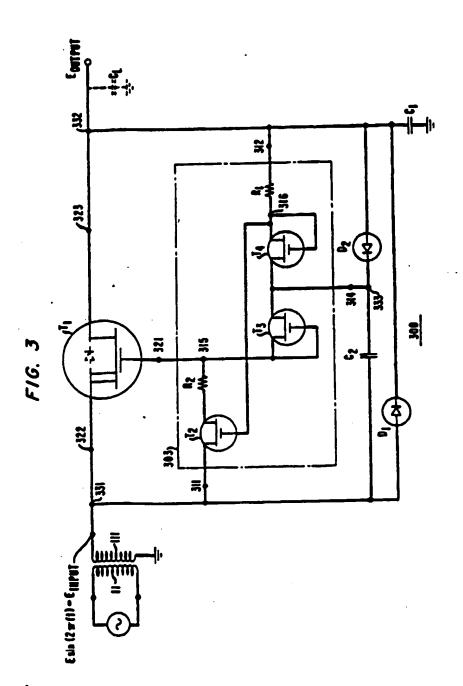








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### INTERNATI NAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No PCT/US 84/01322

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